

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A method of operating a vending machine, comprising:
2 receiving a request for a transaction from a customer at the vending machine;
3 identifying a condition at a retail establishment; and
4 based on the identified condition, outputting an offer to the customer in
5 response to the received request.
- 1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the outputted offer includes a coupon to be
2 redeemed at the retail establishment.
- 1 3. The method of claim 1, wherein the outputted offer includes a redemption code.
- 1 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the condition is a frequency of sales
2 transactions at the retail establishment.
- 1 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the condition is a state of a service queue at the
2 retail establishment.
- 1 6. The method of claim 1, wherein the condition relates to a state of inventory at
2 the retail establishment.
- 1 7. The method of claim 6, wherein the condition relates to whether a particular
2 product is in stock at the retail establishment.
- 1 8. The method of claim 1, further comprising transmitting a signal from the retail
2 establishment to indicate the identified condition.
- 1 9. The method of claim 1, wherein the request is for dispensing a product from the
2 vending machine.

1 10. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of storing at the vending
2 machine data representative of the offer.

1 11. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of selecting the offer from
2 among a plurality of offers.

1 12. The method of claim 11, wherein the selecting step includes generating a
2 selection signal at the retail establishment.

1 13. A method of operating a vending machine, comprising:
2 receiving a request for a transaction from a customer at the vending machine;
3 determining whether the requested transaction can be performed by the vending
4 machine; and
5 if it is determined that the requested transaction cannot be performed by the
6 vending machine, outputting an offer to the customer in response to the received
7 request.

1 14. The method of claim 13, wherein the outputted offer is a coupon to be redeemed
2 at a retail establishment.

1 15. The method of claim 13, wherein the offer is outputted only when a
2 predetermined condition is identified at a retail establishment.

1 16. The method of claim 13, wherein the determining step includes determining
2 whether the vending machine is out of stock of an item requested in the request for a
3 transaction.

1 17. A method of operating a vending machine, comprising:
2 determining a condition at a retail establishment;
3 in response to the determined condition, transmitting a trigger signal to the
4 vending machine; and

5 in response to the trigger signal, outputting an offer to a customer at the vending
6 machine.

1 18. The method of claim 17, wherein the offer is outputted upon the customer
2 requesting a transaction at the vending machine.

1 19. The method of claim 17, wherein the trigger signal is transmitted by a human
2 operator.

1 20. The method of claim 17, wherein the trigger signal is generated and transmitted
2 automatically.

1 21. The method of claim 17, wherein the trigger signal is transmitted directly from
2 the retail establishment to the vending machine.

1 22. The method of claim 17, wherein the trigger signal is transmitted from the retail
2 establishment to the vending machine by way of a controller located remotely from the
3 retail establishment.

1 23. A system for selectively causing a vending machine to output offers, the system
2 comprising:
3 a vending machine including offer means for selectively outputting an offer;
4 detection means located at a retail establishment for detecting a condition at the
5 retail establishment; and
6 communication means for allowing data communication between said detection
7 means and said offer means.

1 24. The system of claim 23, wherein said communication means includes a
2 controller connected for data communication with said detection means and said offer
3 means.

1 25. The system of claim 23, wherein said vending machine is installed outside said
2 retail establishment.

1 26. The system of claim 25, wherein said vending machine is located remotely from
2 said retail establishment.

1 27. A system for selectively causing a vending machine to output offers, the system
2 comprising:

3 a vending machine including offer means for selectively outputting an offer;
4 trigger means for generating a trigger signal at a retail establishment; and
5 transmission means for transmitting the trigger signal from said retail
6 establishment to said vending machine;

7 said offer means being responsive to said trigger signal by outputting an offer
8 upon the vending machine receiving a transaction request.

1 28. A method of operating a vending machine, comprising:
2 detecting a customer in proximity to the vending machine;
3 identifying a condition at a retail establishment; and
4 based on the identified condition, outputting an offer to the detected customer.
1

009712517200